BELLINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Medical Officer

61st. Annual Report

1940.

As before under Ministry of Health instructions the contents of this report are confined to urgent matters affecting Public Health, infectious diseases and Maternity and Child Welfare measures.

Infectious Diseases.

At the beginning of the year there was a sudden severe widespread epidemic of influenza which lasted nearly 2½ months and involved the whole of the area. In addition there was a small outbreak of Chicken Pox, and as was to be expected a few cases of Pneumonia - mostly influenzal in type.

In February two cases of Cerebrospinal Fever occurred. These were removed to Walkergate and all contacts had negative swabs. These were the first cases for 25 years, and the origin of them was obscure. They were widely separated. A third case occurred in March and one in April. Early in March an epidemic of German Measles developed but it was of a mild type and no harm was done.

In April the epidemic of German Measles continued to spread and sporadic outbreaks of Influenza continued. The Influenza died out about the end of the month but German Measles continued until almost the end of May. One or two isolated cases of Diptheria occurred about this time and Chicken Pox and also Whooping Cough developed in one part of the area. By August the area was practically free from infectious disease.

September was a bad month as chickenpox broke out again, a few cases of Whooping Cough occurred and also there was a violent outbreak of Measles. There were also a number of cases of infective catarrhal jaundice scattered about, especially at Otterburn.

October was another bad month. The chickenpox had almost died out but measles was spreading rapidly and in Bellingham eight cases of Scarlet Fever occurred and five more during November.

The month of November shewed some improvement as Chickenpox died out and Measles almost died out, and apart from a few isolated cases there was no Influenza.

In December there was no infectious disease except one or two fresh cases of Measles.

The Year on the whole shewed a considerable incidence of infectious disease. The fact that all four cases of Cerebrospinal Meningitis made quick and perfect recoveries is a tribute to modern methods of treatment with M & B 693.

There is no doubt that a good deal of infectious disease is brought in from outside by Evacuees.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

There is no clinic in the Bellingham area. The health visitors supervise the health of children under school age and also school children. There are two health nurses, one for North Tyne and one for Redesdale.

Maternity work is efficiently carried out by six district Nurses.

G. W. L. KIRK.

Medical Officer of Health.